

THE

Soul's Only Refuge

OR

CHRIST

ALL AND IN ALL.

BY THE

Rev. A. A. E. TAYLOR.

"OTHER REFUGE HAVE I NONE."

PHILADELPHIA:

SYNODAL BOARD OF PUBLICATION,  
NO. 821 CHESTNUT STREET.

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## THE SOUL'S ONLY REFUGE.

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But Christ is all and in all.—Col. iii. 11.

CHRIST is the beginning, the centre and the end of all religion. He is the author, sustainer and finisher of our faith. *He is all; and he is in all.*

Every one who has the slightest conception of the Christian religion, understands that Christ has *something* to do with it. But even some of those most enlightened in it, who are not its possessors, and many of those who are, seem inadequately to appreciate how thoroughly Christ enters into *every part of it*, how truly He is all and in all.

The *different sects* which from time to time



have sprung up among professed believers, are distinguished chiefly by the position which they give the Lord Jesus ; whether they make him all and in all ; or assign him a place in their systems, subordinate to some other person, ceremony or thing, until they descend to that barren nominalism which denies his divinity, and degrades his worthy work to the mere exhibition of a great example.

The grade of piety *in the individual heart* also depends upon the degree in which Christ and his love are exalted in the soul ; whether these fill the soul to the exclusion of every thing else, or hold an inferior position of regard and confidence.

Now the ministers of the Gospel are commanded to preach *Christ and him crucified*. The sinner is invited to *come to Christ*, to *believe on Christ*, to *accept of Christ*. The child of God is required to *abide and rest in Christ*,

to *trust to Christ*. This is to preach religion, to embrace religion, to live religion. *Christ is all and in all*.

If this thought could only be impressed vividly and lastingly upon the minds of men, it would relieve them of many perplexities and free them from a multitude of errors, which the inconsideration of it continually produces. Nine tenths of the persons to whom one goes to converse upon the subject of religion, indicate by their conversation that they do not rightly apprehend this central fact, this main point, *the principal thing* in religion. Many professed Christians when you approach them upon this topic, show their thoughts are upon something else in it than this chief vital truth. They do not appear to have grasped in its great and essential proportions, this fact that in religion, Christ is all and in all. They are looking somewhere

among the branches ; they are not striking at the very *root* of the matter.

We hear persons speak of “getting religion” and “being religious ;” and they have, all the time, something else in view than this, that Christ must be accepted by the soul as its atoning sacrifice and priest. Now unless we keep our eye steadfastly fixed upon this central point we are in constant danger of being led astray from it both in heart and life.

I therefore repeat with emphasis the truth, and desire to devote these pages to the illustration of it, that *in religion Christ is all and in all* ; that no religion can be true or acceptable to God, that none can be profitable or satisfactory to the soul, or saving to the world, in which Jesus Christ our divine Redeemer is not kept constantly and chiefly in view, as the source, sustainer and object of the sinner's trust and hope.



It cannot be otherwise, dear readers, than that Christ should be in all. Consider the history of religion, as bearing upon this point. The origin of religion was in the eternal purpose of God to send *his Son* into the world, according to the Covenant between the Father and the Son for the salvation of a lost race, by which the Son was foreordained to be the Saviour of men from before the foundation of the world. The appearance of religion on the earth, was in the promise given to our fallen first parents that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; in other words *the promise of Christ the Saviour*. This promise of the Messiah was renewed by repeated Covenants with the Patriarchs, for the sustentation of religion, in the early days of our race. While all the sacrifices of the Patriarchs and their descendants, all the types and ceremonies of the law,

and all the prophecies of later days, are utterly inexplicable and meaningless save as they were means and methods of revealing and foreshadowing the Lamb of God, who should take away sin—save as they were of use to set forth *Christ and him crucified*, the sole stay and hope of a perishing world.

And when the Son of God himself came into the world, in the flesh, sinners were bidden by his own voice, as they had been ever taught by the voice of sacrifice, ceremony and prophecy, in the ages before his advent, simply to *come unto him*, to trust in him, to cast the burden of their sins and sorrows upon him. They were taught that the love of Christ in the soul was the pledge of salvation; communion with Christ in the heart, begun and perpetuated through life, the sole method of the sustentation of piety. All the promises of religion looked to *Christ*

in this world and in the next. Union with Christ was declared to be the origin of peace and hope and joy and all Christian graces. Faith in Christ rests upon this union for its strength and endurance. Closer attachment to Christ was declared to be the means of escape from temptation, of triumph over evil, of the subjugation of the lusts of the flesh the powers of Satan and the world. Christ is our strength, our righteousness, our peace, our hope; the object of our desires, faith and homage. He is all and in all to the sinful world.

And as with the present life, so with the future. The eternal prospect of the soul is to be *united to Christ*, to stand in his presence, to dwell with him, and to reign with him for ever and ever. We look *to Christ* to perfect our redemption before his Father's throne in the judgment, and then to conduct us into

those mansions which he has prepared for them that love him, and there to abide with us in perfect bliss eternally. So that *Christ is all and in all* to the sinner for time and for eternity. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever; the beginning, the middle and the end of the soul's confidence. He is the Founder, the Superintendent, the Perfecter of salvation. For of him, and to him, and through him are all things, in the divine economy of Redemption.

Now *Religion* is the understanding, acknowledging and acting upon this truth. He has religion who accepts this as a living truth, cherishes it in his heart, and seeks to have *Christ* in his soul as all and in all; living to him and for him, and hoping to dwell with him hereafter. Any lower or any other view of religion is unworthy the name; is inconsistent with the gospel; is degrading to the

Saviour ; is ruinous to the present life and to the soul's future prospects.

It is of the very highest moment, therefore, that this single truth, *in its bare simplicity*, in its entire separation from all other truths, as being itself the first and loftiest and best, should be kept clearly and definitely and perpetually before the eyes both of believers and unbelievers. The moment any lose the clear apprehension of it, that instant they are in danger of falling into grievous mistakes in doctrine and in practice ; that instant they are in danger of accepting delusive views, of beclouding their own hopes, of misleading sinners who are seeking the way of life. *Keep the Lord Jesus Christ before your heart every hour*, dear reader, as all and in all ; as the object of your faith, as the end of your life, as the joy of your eternity. It will not only reveal at once, how very *vital* this truth



is, but it will also display the *alarming extent of practical ignorance* as to its true bearings, in the popular mind, for us to illustrate it by some of the states of mind, which are not uncommonly found both among the impenitent and professors, concerning religion.

We will suppose the Christian minister to go out from his study, burdened with the desire of drawing souls unto the acceptance of Christ or into nearer relations of communion with him. He passes from house to house, in personal conversation with the members of his congregation.

I. He comes perhaps, first, into contact with one who is to all appearance *careless and indifferent to religion*.

Such questions as the following are propounded, in all tenderness and kindness. My friend, are you seeking *to love the Lord Jesus Christ*, and to find pardon of your sins from

him? Why do you not strive to serve him? Why are you living so far from him, in your sin and peril? Why not *come now* to him for forgiveness?

The minister receives in reply some such answer as this. I do not think that I am *worse* than other persons. I am not living in any great sin. I try to do as well as I know how. I have my faults, but so has every one. And I do not see that I am much worse than most members of the church. I attend the church and give it my support; and I think this is enough for me to do. Now this person may be one who has been brought up *in the church*, who has heard from infancy the way of salvation through the atonement of Christ expounded and explained. And yet here is a *total and radical misapprehension* of the whole meaning and aim of religion.

The minister's reply is to this intent. My friend, you are not looking at the right point. The question of religion is not primarily concerning your relation, either to the world or to the church. It is concerning your relation *to Christ*. You are beginning *at the wrong place*. The Bible tells us, that to secure salvation we must repent of our sin, of our neglect to love God with all our heart, and to serve him in our constant life. The Scriptures, which are our only revealed guide in religion, tell us that we must *come to Christ and seek forgiveness*, which is to be obtained only through his shed blood; that we must place our confidence in him, cast the burden of our sins upon him and ask him to bear them for us; that we must pray the Father that through Jesus Christ we may be reconciled unto him and receive the tokens of his pardon and the hopes of eternal life which

the promises of redemption afford. Here is the point where you should begin. *Christ is all and in all.* No man cometh unto the Father but by him. It is not, therefore, a question of general rectitude in life, of correctness in habits or of exemplary deportment. It is the *far deeper one* of your personal relation to the Saviour of sinners. Do you *trust* to Him for the pardon of your sins? Do you believe that God, *for Christ's sake*, will accept of your soul in the judgment day and lead you unto everlasting life? Do you *love the Lord Jesus Christ*? God has sent his Son to die that you might be saved; do you *accept* of this Son and Saviour and rest your eternal hopes upon his death and resurrection? Until you do this, all else is vain and fruitless. You must enter in by *the door*, into everlasting life. And Christ hath said, '*I am the door; I am the way.*' Here is the

*first step* in religion. And you must take this first step before you can advance one step further, in acceptable service of God.

II. The minister next comes, perchance, to one who is not careless, but who is *seeking in all honesty and sincerity to lead an upright life*, and who is trusting to that life, for a conscience void of offence before God. This person is sedulously *faithful* in all external religious duties. He respects the ordinances and institutions of the church, and is faultless in his outward performance of the requirements of the law. It is a repetition of the case of the rich young man who came to Christ with the question, "What lack I yet?" He has sought to do everything but *give his heart* to the Saviour, everything but *devote himself* wholly and entirely unto Christ. He also has made the fatal mistake of *beginning at the wrong place* in his religion. He deems



the whole of practical religion to consist in external obedience, in outward morality. Hence he seeks after *that* only. He has never probed the depths of salvation ; never glanced up into the heights of redeeming love. His is a *surface* religion, having only the display of foliage and fruit, without the stem and root ; *morality without piety*. He does not comprehend the meaning of the passage that Christ is all and in all ; for his religion is one without Christ ; one in which *Christ is nothing*. He has sought to do *without Christ* what can only be done truly with Christ ; as the source and strength of the holy life. A religious, exemplary, devoted life, is to *follow* the acceptance of the Saviour by the soul. Morality is the *fruit* of piety, *and not the piety itself*. Let the heart once truly accept of Christ and devote itself to him, and this correct life will certainly be manifested. Seek

first, not *your own* righteousness, but that which is of *God in Christ*, and the godly life will succeed. But so sure as one seeks to obtain the fruit without having first planted and cherished the root in the soil, the effort must result in a *hollow, heartless formality*, which will be as far from true religion, as an impenitent soul is far from Christ. It is worse than vain to hope for the attainment of salvation, by living a life of comparative rectitude, without cherishing any regard for Christ, without making Christ and his love *the exciting principle* of this correct deportment. *Christ is all and in all*. We must serve God *because* we love the Lord Jesus; for we never can serve him acceptably until we do receive and honour the Son whom he has sent to be our Redeemer. And when we do come to love Jesus and feel that we are dedicated to him, then the *incentives* to faithfulness in our ex-

ternal life will be such, both in their nature and degree, as we never before could experience. Have *first, Christ accepted by the soul*; and from this condition all other requirements of morality and obedience will naturally flow.

III. We will next suppose the minister in the course of his duty, to meet one who is *troubled about his soul's welfare*, and who is beginning to have ardent desires for the forgiveness of sin. Conscience is awakened. The Holy Spirit is moving the heart.

Such conversation as this ensues. You would like to become a Christian? *Yes, I would.* Are you willing to renounce the world as the object of your love and life, and devote the remainder of your days to the service of God? *I think I am.* Do you believe that Jesus Christ is an able and willing Saviour? *I do.* Do you believe in his

atoning sacrifice, and credit his promises to those who come to him? *Yes, I do.* Then why do you not come to him, cast yourself upon his grace and take him at his word? Why not accept his promises for yourself and claim him as *your own Saviour*, for him that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out.

In a large majority of cases, so deeply do men *practically misapprehend* the gospel, the reply will be to this intent. "Oh, I am not prepared to come; I am not *worthy* to come. I'm afraid *I could not live* as I would wish to live. I fear that I might in some way *bring reproach* upon the cause. I will wait until I become *better fitted* before I confess Christ."

Now it is right that we should feel our sin and unworthiness most deeply; and should have desires to be made more like Christ in our lives. It is right that we should not rush *heedlessly* into the presence of Christ and

should regard the approach to him as a very solemn step. But it is *a radical mistake* to suppose that we must *begin* our religious life, *by trying to make ourselves better, before we come to Christ.* The Scriptures nowhere imply such a prerequisite. This is mistaking the nature of religion. It is confounding the *means* with *one of the results.* Religion will make you better necessarily, though its chief end is the salvation of your soul, in which this growing better is <sup>1</sup>one of the steps. What the sinner is required to do is simply to repent of his sins, forsake them, come to Jesus seeking pardon for them, and then *trust to him both for the forgiveness of sin and the purification of the heart.* You can never make yourself worthy to come. You must just come in your unworthiness, under your sense of guilt, feeling that you are unfit to enter the kingdom of Heaven. And then it



is *Christ's work* to make you better, to prepare you by his grace for heaven. Accept of him as your Saviour; offer yourself to him to be his servant; and he'll take care of the rest in due time. He'll see that you have incentives and strength for a faithful life, if you yield yourself to him.

IV. Or the person whom the minister approaches may be one who *now is and has long been under deep conviction*, in great anxiety, but who has been unable to find peace. Sore have been the struggles of his soul with sin; earnestly has he sought to live a better life and to become prepared to come to Christ. But there is no satisfaction, no rest, no assurance to be found. The soul is in deep darkness and severe distress. When asked, Do you trust in Christ as your Saviour? the reply is, *I hope I do*. I want to be a Christian. I want to accept of Christ. But I

can't seem *to get religion*. I can't seem to find hope and peace in Jesus. I can't live in Jesus. I can't live in satisfaction and in the enjoyment of religion.

It is to be much regretted on many accounts that the phrases "*to get religion*" and "*to have religion*," have ever been framed. In their general and popular use they perpetuate just this error which it is so needful should be thoroughly dissipated. "*Getting religion*," is simply accepting of Christ, devoting one's self to the service of Christ, being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. "*To have religion*," is only to have received Christ as the atoning sacrifice of the soul, to have relied upon him for the pardon of our sins, with the benefits which necessarily follow this step. And all this anxiety and trouble arises from losing sight of this main truth that *Christ is all and in all*.

If you truly *believe in Christ*, if you are now ready to put your trust in him, then why be anxious, why be filled with fear? Can't you trust *his word*, when he promises that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved? Why do you doubt that your sins will be forgiven if you lay them down at his feet and implore pardon, according to his command? You must *believe that what he has said he will perform*. You must believe that when you have come to him, he will make good his promises *to you*, as well as to any other penitent. When you have done *this*, you will find peace in believing. When you implicitly trust his word and promise, your anxiety will depart, and your confidence will appear. For *when you accept of Christ, then Christ accepts of you*, as surely as his everlasting word is true. And there is no further room for your doubt and distress. "Whatsoever things ye

desire when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, and ye shall have them."

V. Or perhaps the pastor finds *a truly converted soul in trouble*. It has sought to receive Christ, in former days. It has *once* enjoyed a sense of pardoning love in the Redeemer. It has tasted peace in believing. But now it is in gloom. It can no longer recognize the fact that Christ is *its* Saviour, that it is one of his children. And it is filled with grief and dismay. It fears that it was never truly changed in heart. It has not had those *deep emotions* of which some speak. There has been no excitement, no sudden, extraordinary illumination, no great and thorough breaking up of the fountains of the soul. Hence it apprehends its hopes to have been delusive. And now it yearns to be found in Christ.

The course of the guide in such a case is

simply to lead that soul back to the consideration of this great first principle in religion. Are you willing and ready *to receive Christ* as your only trust? Do you feel *truly penitent* for sin, and *do you take Christ to be your Saviour from sin*? Do you trust his word, that he is able and willing to save to the uttermost, *all* who will come unto him? Do you cast yourself wholly, unreservedly upon his atoning work and grace? Do you feel that you love Jesus and do you desire to serve him all your days, with all your heart and might and strength? Have you sought to *consecrate* yourself to him, a full, free, loving gift, as all that you can do?

If you can reply in the affirmative to these questions, why do you doubt, why distrust his grace and mercy? Remember that *Christ is all and in all*. Look not away from this truth. Await not great convulsions of



soul. If you *lay your sins on Jesus*; if you trust your soul to Jesus and to him alone for salvation; if you can meekly look up and taking hold by faith upon his promises of deliverance, can hear your heart within you whisper, "*my Saviour and my God,*" then you should be rejoicing; then you should be praising his name because he has permitted you so to receive him; then *you should be filled with hope* and be no longer downcast and trembling. For until the heart is changed it never can love Christ, never can rely upon his merits for salvation. This your trust, is *a token* of the change in you. *Higher emotions*, larger love, stronger faith will come, when you recognize their existence *in any measure*, and are brought to *feel and acknowledge* to yourself that Christ is indeed yours and you are his. But *until you do bring yourself to recognize this fact*, until you

do feel that you have sought to obey his commands in coming and trusting your guilty soul to him, you need never expect to have true peace and enjoyment of heart. For in not doing this you are standing in your own light, you are hiding the truth from your own heart, you are doubting and hesitating, when you should be trusting and leaning in quiet confidence upon the bosom of your loving Saviour.

O, dear readers, we never learn the lesson of faith until we make *Christ all and in all*. We must go straight to Christ in everything without turning either to the right hand or to the left. When you are oppressed with a sense of sin, *go to Christ* and commit yourself to him. He will bear your load for you. When you are *filled with doubt and fear*, lest you may not be his child, *go straight to Jesus* and tell him your fears, and repose anew

your trust in him. No matter what the troubles or the grief, *go to Jesus*. His mercy seat is always open to the cry of the distressed. If you feel that you are *unworthy*, go to him; *he is worthy* and will lay his worthiness in your stead before the Father's throne, and will there intercede for you and secure your pardon. If you feel that you are *needy and helpless*, hasten at once to him; *he will relieve your need* and will fill your soul with blessings. If you are *weak in faith and unable to resist sin*, Oh! flee unto him and *he will give you strength* sufficient to lay your temptation in the dust. Cast your guilty, helpless, unworthy soul down at his feet, *he will never spurn thy soul*. The broken and the contrite heart he will not despise. He came to call not the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance. "*Sinner*s Jesus came to call." He came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. *The*

*weary and the heavy-laden* he urges to come.  
He will never reject a soul that does come.

Keep this truth then ever prominent in  
your mind and heart, that *Jesus is all and in  
all*. Without him is no hope and no salvation.  
*In him* is hope and everlasting life.

The doubts and fears of the Christian  
are beautifully expressed and answered, in the  
words of a mourner in darkness, and the  
reply made to them by a child of God.

*Mourner* : 'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought;  
*Do I love the Lord or no ?*  
*Am I his, or am I not ?*

*Reply* : Mourner, why these anxious fears ?  
Wherefore shouldst thou doubtful be ?  
*Christ*, thine advocate, appears—  
*He* has died instead of thee :  
*He* thy punishment has borne—  
*Look to Jesus !*—Cease to mourn !

*Mourner :* *If I love, why am I thus ?*  
*Why this cold, this lifeless frame ?*  
Hardly sure can they be worse,  
Who have never heard his name.

*Reply :* Frames and feelings fluctuate ;  
*These thy Saviour ne'er can be ;*  
Love itself may oft abate ;  
Learn thyself *in Christ* to see :  
Then be *feelings* what they will,  
*Jesus is thy Saviour still.*

And for all of us, penitent and impenitent together, these precious thoughts of the following well-known hymn, are full of relief and comfort ; and teach us what should be our constant course in making Jesus all and in all.

*Just as I am*—without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come !

*Just as I am*—and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

*Just as I am*—though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt—  
“Fightings within, and fears without,”  
O Lamb of God, I come!

*Just as I am*—poor, wretched, blind,  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

*Just as I am*—Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

*Just as I am*—Thy love I own,  
Has broken every barrier down:  
Now, to be Thine, yea Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come!

While to the voice of such a self-consecration as this, the voice of Jesus himself is



heard in response, speaking from his mediatorial seat beside the throne, and saying, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

## HYMNS.

JESUS, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the raging billows roll,  
While the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me;  
All my trust on thee is staid,  
All my help from thee I bring;  
Cover my defenceless head,  
With the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;  
All in all in thee I find;

Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick and lead the blind :  
Just and holy is thy name,  
I am all unrighteousness ;  
Vile and full of sin I am,  
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,  
Grace to pardon all my sin ;  
Let the healing streams abound,  
Make and keep me pure within.  
Thou of life the fountain art,  
Freely let me take of thee :  
Spring thou up within my heart,  
Rise to all eternity.

---

O THOU, that hearest the prayer of faith,  
Wilt thou not save a soul from death,  
That casts itself on thee ?  
I have no refuge of my own,  
But fly to what my Lord has done  
And suffered once for me.

Slain in the guilty sinner's stead,  
His spotless righteousness I plead,  
And his atoning blood :  
Thy righteousness my robe shall be,  
Thy merit shall avail for me,  
And bring me near to God.

Then snatch me from eternal death,  
The Spirit of adoption breathe,  
His consolation send :  
By him some word of life impart,  
And sweetly whisper to my heart,  
“ Thy Maker is thy Friend.”

The king of terrors then would be  
A welcome messenger to me,  
To bid me come away :  
Unclogged by earth, or earthly things,  
I'd mount, I'd fly with eager wings,  
To everlasting day.

THE END.



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